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# HUNKER'S P. O.



A Farce in One Act.

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BY CLARA J. H. HURD.



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## A FARCE — IN — ONE ACT



BY CLARA J. H. HURD.

PRESS OF  
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## **Hunker's P. O.**

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Last evening the people of All Soul's Universalist church gave a play which was a pronounced success. It vividly depicting the lives of the country people of a Western Reserve village, gathered at the store. Mr. A. E. Kelly as Uncle Doolittle, Mr. H. W. Clark as Washington Worthless, and Mrs. E. P. Bonner as Emily Swift, seemed to have missed their calling and reflected due credit upon Mrs. F. S. Hurd, the author.

The jokes were sparkling with wit and humor, and were immensely enjoyed by an overcrowded house reminding one of a vacation in a rural district. The entertainment will be repeated this evening.—*Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 11th, 1900.*

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## **At "Hunker's P. O.**

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The play given by the people at the Universalist Church last evening was a success, being pronounced by many the best thing of its kind ever given in the city. Mr. E. A. Kelley as "Uncle Doolittle," Mr. H. W. Clark as "Washington Worthless," and Mrs. E. P. Bonner as "Emmy Swift" were especially clever. Great credit is reflected upon the author and manager Mrs. F. S. Hurd of this city. The stage setting exhibited the full stock of a country store. The wit was new and sparkling, the jokes were all up to date, and the audience that filled the vestry to flowing laughed from the beginning to the close. The wit, music, stories, and costumes were like a tonic and refreshed like a vacation in the country. The entertainment will be repeated this evening.—*Cleveland Leader, May 11th, 1900.*

## Cast of Characters.



Mr. True,	-	-	-	Storekeeper.
Mrs. True,				
Uncle Doolittle,	-			Oldest Inhabitant.
Washington Worthless,				
Emma Swift,	-	-	-	Hired Girl.
Mrs. Simpkins,	-	-		Village Gossip.
Mr. Simpkins,				
Mrs. Green,				
Reuben White,				
Mr. Hill, )	-	-	-	City People.
Mrs. Hill, )				
Mirandy Jane Smith				
Susan Peters,				
Mrs. Warren,				
Nellie,				School Ma'am.
Eva Todd,				
Kitty Smart,				
Jennie Jones	-	-	-	Bride.
Jimmie Mills,				
Henry Jenks,				
Italian,				
Tramp,				
Drummer,				
Bear,				

Door to store, center back; door from store to kitchen, left front. Post office left back, counters and shelves on sides, groceries on right, cotton cloth, calico, sundries of all kinds on left.

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## **Properties.**

Brooms, crackers, cheese, herrings, feather duster, rakes, postal cards, letters, papers, box of sawdust, packages of groceries, box of old fashioned hats, mail bag, bundles, lanterns, whips, clothes lines, clothespins, scales, old fashioned leather mittens, overalls, stockings, rubber boots, shoes, tinware, lamps, lamp chimneys, oil cans, candy, gum, tobacco, cigars, fly paper, pitch forks, mop sticks, codfish, nail kegs, jug, basket, slate pencils, candy-cigars, nails, pocketbooks, frying pan, broken teapot, calico, soap, comb, etc., etc.

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## **Costumes.**

Mrs. True, Mrs. Green, Emma, Mrs. Peters, Mirandy and Jennie Jones, in plain calico gowns.

Mrs. True, Mrs. Green, Mirandy and Jennie in light calico or white spouse.

Emma, a blue and white gingham apron.

Mrs. Simpkins, old-fashioned wool gown, bonnet and shawl.

Emma, Mrs. Green and Jennie wear sun bonnets.

Nellie, dark skirt, shirt waist, sailor hat.

Mr. and Mrs. Hill, modern, stylish dress.

Small boys, calico waists, trousers about four inches below knees, buttoned to waists by large, white buttons.

Little girls, sleeve aprons.

Reuben's shirt, Jimmie and Henry's waists, Susan Peters, Jennie Jones' and Kitty's apron all to be made from the same calico, rather striking pattern.

*Curtain rises and discloses Mr. True tipped back in chair feet up on nail keg, apparently fast asleep. Flies disturb him and he wakens yawns, rises, goes over to window and looks out:*

MR. TRUE,

*(Going to door, left, into living rooms and calling:)*

Mother, Mother, can you come in an' tend store for awhile?  
I want to go over to the blacksmith shop.

MRS. TRUE,

*Outside.*

Yes, I'll be there in a minute, soon as I can rinse out my dish cloth.

MR. TRUE,

*Straightening Boxes, etc.*

Thet pesky cat has been sleeping in the box of codfish agin. I'll have to make a cover for thet box sometime. *(Takes up Codfish and dusts it with a feather duster.)*

*(Enter Mrs. True.)* Left

MR. TRUE,

All right, mother, I'm off. *(Meets Mrs. Peters carrying jug, just entering Center.)* Howdedo Susan. Mother'll wait on you.  
*(Exit.)* Center.

MRS. PETERS,

Howdedo Charity. Where's thet swift girl ye got from the lower corner to help ye? Can't she just step out an' watch old Fannie a minute? I'm in a hurry an' and it won't pay to hitch.

MRS. TRUE,

Emmy, come here, Emmy.

*(Enter Emma.)* Left.

MRS. TRUE,

You jest step out an' watch Mrs. Peters' horse while she does a little tradin'

*(Exit Emma.)* Center door.

MRS. PETERS,

I'm goin' up to Mary Anne's to borrow her big kettle. Our apples is rottin' terrible bad, an' I'm goin' to make some on 'em up into mince meat to save 'em. I want some sale molasses an' raisins fer it.



MRS. TRUE,

(*Preparing to weigh raisins.*)

Raisins is up, how many you want?

MRS. PETERS,

I want a pound. How much be they?

MRS. TRUE,

Fifteen cents, but ther're nice.

MRS. PETERS,

Fifteen cents—Mercy sakes. I guess I wont take none. Mis Judd got two pounds to the Falls yesterday. I'll borrow a pound o' her till they're cheaper. I want two quarts o' sale molasses. How much is that?

MRS. TRUE,

Thirteen cents a quart.

MRS. PETERS,

Land that's high too I can git it to the Falls for twelve an' a half cents. I wont take but a quart here. I'll get the other quart to the Falls. How much is aigs.

MRS. TRUE,

We've ben givin' ten cents.

MRS. PETERS,

Well, these is Bramy aigs, they're bigger an' worth more. I can git——

(*Enter Emma.*) Center door.

EMMA,

Wal, she's gone.

MRS. PETERS AND MRS. TRUE,

Who's gone.

EMMA,

The Horse.

MRS. TRUE,

I told you to watch her.

(*Both run out.*) Center door.

EMMA,

I did watch her long's I could see her. I couldn't watch her through a hill.

(*Enter Mrs. True.*) Center door.

MRS. TRUE,

Now thet's too bad. She'll have to walk clear home an' start over agin. You can go to work at them hit an' miss carpet rags, Emmy. Be kind o' saving o' the green. I'm a leetle short on green.

(*Exit Emma.*) Left door.

(*Enter Mrs. Warren.*) Center door. (*With face bandaged.*)

MRS. TRUE,

Why, whatever is the matter, Mrs. Warren? You look terrible bad.

MRS. WARREN,

I've ben hev'in' the awfulles time with teeth ache. I thought I'd jist run in an' ask you what to do fer it. You can most allus help a body.

MRS. TRUE,

Hev ye tried horse radish leaves an' mustard plaster?

MRS. WARREN,

Yes, both, but it gits worse an' worse.

MRS. TRUE,

Wal, I believe I'd keep a hop bag wrung out of hot vinegar on there for a spell, that's soothing. If thet don't ease it you'd better try hot mush poultices. I'll drop in to-night an' see how 'tis. Hev ye got hops? I'll be sure to see you before bed time.

MRS. WARREN,

Yes, I got hops an' I'm much obliged.

(*Exit Mrs. Warren.*) Center door.

(*Enter Mrs. Green.*) Center door. (*Carrying a tin pail.*)

MRS. GREEN,

Howdedo Miss True. Here's thet settin' o' eggs I promised ye. They are speckled. Hamburg every one.

MRS. TRUE,

I'm obliged to you I'm sure. I hope I can do something for you some time. (*calls*) Emmy, Emmy.

MRS. GREEN,

Aint thet Mis Peters's 'lasses jug?

MRS. TRUE.

Yes, she's goin' to make mince meat tomorrow. (*calls*) Emmy come here. (*Enter Emma trailing carpet rags.*) Why didn't you come when I first called you?

I-I was a hurrying to get the rags sewed 'fore the green all run out.

MRS. TRUE.

Now see here, handle these eggs keerful, they're Hamburg, take them out an' set thet old hen thet's settin' in the corner of the wood shed. Don't joggle 'em any more than ye can help.

(*Exit Emma.*) Left door. (*Stubs toes and nearly falls, shakes eggs.*)

MRS. GREEN.

Seems to me Mis Peters is late in the season fer her mince meat, but some folks allus behind with their killin' an' dryin' an' soap makin' an' she's one on 'em.

MRS. TRUE.

Everbody knows you're forehanded Mis Green, but taint everybody thet can be. There's she thet was Mary Higgins. She beats 'em all. She meant well an' was allus a tryin' to git ahead but she never seemed to git ketched up. After she hed them two pair o' twins she was worse than ever. She kep a washin' later an' later in the week, till finally it were Saturday 'fore she got her washin' done an' the next week it strung along till Monday. She come in here a fellin' good 'cause she'd washed a Monday. I told our folks she needn't fell so chirk about it, it was the week's before's wash if it was done a Monday. That was a month ago an' she's still washin' Monday, but as near as I can callate she's washin' a week behind. I aint heerd o' her doin' a extra one.

MRS. GREEN.

Well, well I never, such shiftlessness. I want seven pounds o' brown sugar. I don't think there's much sweetness to white. Hev ye ben buying much maple sugar this season?

MRS. TRUE.

(*Weights sugar and consults a small book.*)

Not much. Folks is makin' more molasses. Thet'll be forty two cents.

MRS. GREEN.

How much is sugar?

MRS. GREEN.

Five cents a pound, but that seems too much for seven pounds (*consults book*) Thirty-five cents. I must a looked in the wrong place.

MRS. GREEN.

Hev ye got it down in a book?

MRS. TRUE.

Why yes, ye see its quicker. Sam got me a "ready reckon-er" an' it don't take me so long as it does to count it up. I've kind o' forget my mulplication table.

MRS. GREEN.

Yes, a body does git rusty. I used to sing the whole thing from the ones straight through to the thirteens, but I've forgot most everythin' now but the fives, (*sings*) once five is five, two times five is ten, three times five is fifteen, an' four times five is twenty.

MRS. TRUE.

Yes, I knew it all once, an' could sing every capital from Maine right straight through. They don't hev any such schools now as we used to go to.

(*Enter Emma*) LEFT (*sleeve and apron torn, shoes unlaced hair in disorder, puffing*)

EMMA.

Well, I set her. She didn't want to set after I'd got them eggs under her. I hed to run her down an' ketch her twiet, an' she flopped roum' so she broke two o' them humbug eggs.

MRS. TRUE.

(*Holds up hands*)

O, Emmy.

EMMA.

(*Cheerfully*)

But I put two o' them eliny eggs in an' turned the mop pail town over her' an' I guess she'll stay set.

(*Exit Emma*) L. D.

MRS. TRUE.

Well I declare for it, she gits stupider every day. I spects them two nest eggs 'll hatch out eliny coachins.

(*Enter Kitty*) C. D.

KITTY,

Mrs. True, ma wants to borrow a drawin' o' tea.

MRS. TRUE,

(*Giving her the tea*)

Tell yer ma, Kitty, that we keep tea to sell.

KITTY,

O, she knows it, but we don't like your kind.

(*Exit Kitty*) C. D.

MRS. TRUE,

Wal, did you ever.

MRS. GREEN,

Never. O, hev you seen Kier Hill and his wife yet?

MRS. TRUE,

Yes, they've been in here two or three times. Kier's got real citified and stylish.

MRS. GREEN,

I say she must be real shiftless. They say she keeps a girl an' hires her washin' done besides. I want a pound o' tea, *green* an' a quarter of a pound of ginger.

MRS. TRUE,

(*Weighing up articles.*)

Well, Kier must make the cattle business pay better than his father ever did.

MRS. GREEN,

Why, he haint in the cattle business is he?

MRS. TRUE,

Yes, he is too. I heerd so much about what he did for a livin' I asked him pint blank an' he said he was a stock jobber.

MRS. GREEN,

He never seemed no great hand fer a job of any kind. I'll hev Jonah see him about old Brindle. She's gettin' too old to be good fer anything but beef. Mebby he can take her up to the city and sell her.

MRS. TRUE,

Yes, let him hev first chance. I believe in encourain' our own town boys. (*Emmy appears in door.*) (L. D.) Folks say that she has to hire all her dresses made.

(*Mrs. Green holding up hands.*)

MRS. GREEN,

Now, no one needn't tell me that he makes money enough buyin' an' sellin' cattle to keep up any such style. There's a nigger in the woodpile there sure. (*Emma disappears.*)

MRS. TRUE,

Mebby so. They are tryin' to git Kier's mother to go back home with 'em fer a visit.

MRS. GREEN,

I hope she will, then we'll know all about how much they pay the girl an' everything.

MRS. TRUE,

Yes, it would do her a world of good, I tell her. I've offered to feed the chickens an' cat. She's kind o' skeery o' the cars.

MRS. GREEN,

Wal so's anyone else. You just take your life in your hand everytime you ride on the pesky things. I want a spool of white thread, number fifty. I guess that's all. I'm goin' over to Sarah's. Can't you go fer a little while.

MRS. TRUE,

Yes, I guess I will, I've ben tryin' fer the last week to git over to borrow her bask pattern.

EMMA,

(*Enter Emma breathless.*) (L. D.)

He's gone, he aint there.

MRS. TRUE,

Who aint where?

EMMA,

The nigger in Mis Hill's woodpile. I went over to see him, but he'd got away.

MRS. TRUE,

Never mind, its a good thing if he has. Can you tend store awhile? There won't be anyone in 'less its the school younguns after something an' you can give it to 'em can't you?

EMMA,

Can't I what?

MRS. TRUE,

Giv 'em what they want, candy, pencils, gum, you know. I aint never left her but I guess she'll manage.

(*Exit Mrs. True and Mrs. Green*) C. D.

EMMA,

Course I can run this store. Its easier than washin' dishes an' I rather do it.

(*Enter Jimmy.*) C. D. (*aged twelve.*)

Hul'o, Emmy where's the boss? I want a slate pencil.

(*Lays down penny.*)

EMMA,

(*Pushing back penny.*)

She said if any of youse wanted anything I was to give it to youse.

(*Gives slate pencil.*)

JIMMY,

O, she did, did she? I want a candy cigar an' a stick of gum an' a chunk of that candy. Say, I'll see you again.

(*Emma gives candy and gum.*)

(*Exit Jimmy.*)

WASH.

(*Enter Wash. Worthless.*)

Hullo, Emmy, you runnin this shebang?

EMMA,

Runnin' it?

WASH.

Y-yes, bossin' the store, sellin' things.

EMMA,

Yes, do youse want anything?

WASH.

Y-yes I want a pair o' spenders. I'm goin to Shenango.

EMMA,

To She—who?

WASH.

T-to Shenango. I-I dunno jest where it is but I'm goin.'

EMMA,

Do youse know anybody there?

WASH.

No, I-I do know anybody an' anybody don't know me, thet's why I'm goin.' I-I aint got no money or nothin' else.

(*turns pockets and leaves them*) an-an I need someone to take care of me. M-most of the boys has got wives, an' I-I want one too, so I'm goin' to Shenango where don't nobody know me an' mebbly I can find some fool 'at 'll marry me.

EMMA,

Aint it a nawful ways to Shenango?

WASH.,

Y-yes, its a thunder of a ways an' I'd hev to walk, (*brightening.*) S-say Emmy I never thought of you. Y-you might marry me. I'll give ye every cent I got. Will ye? Come on.

EMMA,

Come on where?

WASH.

Come on let's git married. W-we can go to the Falls to live, an' you could git plenty of work there, washin' and cleanin' an' I-I'd take care of ye. W-will ye?

EMMA,

I'll see. I wouldn't be a marryin' everybody. (*Enter three or four small boys led by Jimmy all asking for something.*

*All scatter as Mrs. True comes in.*) C. D.

MRS. TRUE,

Now, Wash, what are you hanging round here for?

WASH.

I-I jist come in to see if ye got any pocket books.

MRS. TRUE,

Yes, we've got plenty pocket books. (*Lays out two or three.*)

WASH.

(*Examining one carefully.*)

Ho-how much is this one?

MRS. TRUE,

Fifty cents.

WASH.

W-well I'll take this one. I-I guess ye can jist charge it.

MRS. TRUE,

Well, I rather guess not. You can jist leave it till I see your money. By the looks of your pockets I'd know you was a sufferin' fer a pocketbook. There comes Mis Peters back. I'll take her 'lasses out to her.

(*Exit Mrs. True.*)

WASH.

I-I say Emmy, there's goin' to be a dance up to the Corners



an' I'm goin' to help take care of the horses for a ticket. D-do you want to go?

EMMA,

Well, I should say, but I can't, I aint got nothin' to wear.

WASH,

Y-ye don't need nothin.' Its a maskerade. I-I'm goin' as a Duke.

EMMA,

What's a Duke?

WASH.

A-a Duke is one of them fellars that wear a cape all lined with vermin and a feather in their hat an' walk this way,

(*swagger across stage, hands in pockets*) an say—"in that bright Mexican of yours they haint no sich word as fail."

EMMA,

Where be youse a goin' to git the close?

WASH.

R-rent 'em fer two dollars. S-say can't ye lend me that much?

EMMA,

I aint got but two dollars, an' I've been a savin' of it to pay fer some shoes. Say, what do they call a Duke's wife? I'd like to be one of them.

WASH.

A-a Duke's wife is a Dukess o' course, but you don't look like one o' them, an-an your feets to big an' ye don't walk like a Dukess. Say I heerd 'em talkin' bout a real swell girl that went barefooted or something. "Twillbe" they called her. Go as fer an-an ye wont need no shoes, an' I can have the money.

EMMA,

I-I'd hate to go barefooted to a party an' you—

WASH.

D-don't you want to see your Washy a lookin' like a Duke?

EMMA,

Yes youse can have it. (*Trys to find her pocket*)

(*Enter Mrs. True.*)

MRS. TRUE,

Clear out of here Wash. Go out an' bring in the mail bag. Rastus is just comin' over the further hill. (*Exit Wash*)

Emmy, you go an' blow the horn fer Mr. True, he allus fergits when he gits to talkin'.

(*Exit Emma*.) L. D.

(*Enter Mrs. Simp.*)

MRS. SIMP.

Good afternoon Charity. I jist told Cy thet I was'nt goin' to stay cooped up there at home any longer, ploughin' or no ploughin', and he could jist hitch up the horse. Hev ye heerd about Geo. Smith's baby dyin'?

MRS. TRUE.

Why, taint dead is it?

MRS. SIMP.

Yes, it is. Died last night 'bout twelve o'clock. We've hed a stroke o' bad luck too, lost our muley cow night afore last. They sent for a doctor but he didn't git there till after the baby was dead. We didn't know but that she might hev choked to death on a cob o' corn. Cy threw her two or three ears afore he came in to supper, an' when he went out to shet up the barn fer the night, he found her stretched out dead. I stopped to see her on my way down. They've got her laid out on the parlor center table an' you never see a peacefuller lookin' corpse. All in white an' a bunch o' violets in her hand. (*Wipes eyes.*) She was the best cow we hed. The school-ma'am fixed her and stayed with 'em last night. An' speakin' of the school ma'am makes me think, I wish the directors would get rid of her. She's too high flutin' fer us folks here. She's chuck full of these new langwidges, Latin an' Creek, an' twiet a week she talks to the younguns 'bout their insides, Fillology she calls it. Heaven knows we have aches and pains enough now without huntin' round fer any new thing, eperglottises an' the like to bother with. There's Eliza Strout,——

(*Enter Emma.*) L. D.

EMMA,

What ye goin, to hev fer supper Aunt Charity?

MRS. TRUE.

Why, less see, there's them potatoes to warm, an' that cold corn beef left from dinner. You might open a can of tomatoeses an' make some biseuit. There's plenty of good fresh apple sauce.

(*Exit Emma.*) L. D.

MRS. SIMP.

Yes, as I was a sayin' there's Eliza Strout, there never was a healthier woman than what she was afore her son Henry took to doctorin'. He used to say he could sense anything better a studyin' of it out loud, so he used to set an' read out o' them doctor books o' hisen, an' she used to hear it, an' afore the winter was over she'd had every disease in his books an' some beside. My, how she used to suffer. Got as poor as shad an' liked to died. After he went away to school she perked right up and haint seen a sick day sense. Some folks was mean enough to say thet if she hed to pay fer all the doctorin' she got that winter she'd got well sooner. I wouldn't repeat that, fer I dunno as its so, but she's close there's no denyin' thet. I honestly believe thet she'd hev a run o' fever any day if she could be doctored through it free o' charge.

(*Enter Kitty with plaster.*)

KITTY,

Ma wants you to change this plaster an' give her a fresh one. This don't draw none. She's worn it a week an' her back aint no better. She thinks the strength must a ben gone fore she got it.

MRS. TRUE,

You tell yer ma thet we aint hed no new ones in sense she got this one

KITTY,

Well, aint you got any porous plasters without the holes? She thinks mebbv its the holes that don't draw.

MRS. TRUE,

No, no other kind. You tell yer ma to put a little cayenne pepper on afore she puts it on agin an' it will draw.

(*Exit Kitty.*)

(*Enter Emma.*) L. D.

EMMA, (*With frying pan in her hand.*)

Say, Mis True, Mis Briggs is a goin' cross lots over toward Miss Reeves. She's got on her brown dress an' got a green pa sol, an' is a carryin' a leather ridicule. Youse'll hev to hurry if you see her she's most out of sight. (*Both run to window.*)

(*Exit Emma hurriedly.*)

MRS. TRUE,

I wonder where Mis Briggs is a goin' anyway.

MRS. SIMP.

Most likely over to Deacon Pillsbury's. Speakin' of Deacon Pillsbury aint he the closest man you ever see. Hev ye heerd 'bout him an' Mis Higgins's turkey?

(*Enter Eva.*) C. D.

EVA.

O, Mis 'True, ma thinks the baby acts kind o' croupy an' wants to know what you would give her.

MRS. TRUE.

Tell yer ma to rub her chiest well with goose grease and give her about a teaspoonful of skunk's oil an' keep her warm.

MRS. SIMP.

Tell yer ma to put onion drafts on her feet, that will start her sweatin'.

MRS. TRUE.

I'll come in before bedtime an' see how she's gittin' on. Tell yer ma not to worry. I never saw a case of croup yet thet I couldn't get the best of. (*Exit Eva.*) I wonder why thet mail don't come.

MRS. SIMP.

Where was I, O yes, I was jist tellin' 'bout Deacon Pillsbury an' Betsey's turkey. I was into Betsey's when he come in an' I heerd him. You see Betsey's old yellow turkey made a nest under the line fence between her garden an' the Deacon's pasture. Deacon found it an' counted the eggs an' come in an' told her that seven was on his land an' she could give him seven of the turkeys when they were hatched or pay rent. Now don't repeat thet a comin' from me. It may not be true you know. He's tighter than the bark on a tree. Speakin' o' trees makes me think o' Joe Spuller.

MRS. TRUE.

What's the matter o' Joe?

MRS. SIMP.

Why, aint you heerd how he broke his laig? Why, let me see 'twas last Friday. No, 'twas a Saturday, for I was jist wipin' up my floor when I seen the doctor go past an' go in there, so jist as soon as I got my moppin' done, I put on my sunbonnet an' hurried up there to find out what was the matter I didn't know but Mis Spuller was hevin' a fit. (*Loud crash of broken crockery*)

(*Mrs. True calls.*)

Now what Emmy?

(*Enter Emma carrying broken teapot.*)

EMMA,

The handle and spout is come off this ere teapot.

MRS. TRUE.

Come off? How did thet happen?

EMMA,

Why it dropped.

(*Mrs. True shakes head in despair.*)

(*Exit Emma.*) L. D.

MRS. SIMP.

When I got up to Spullers I found out 'twas Joe. Seems he'd gone up to the north lot to cut down an nold chestnut tree to make some rails, an' goodness knows he needs 'em. If his cows want so weak from starvation they could get over any fence he's got. He callated the tree wouldn't fall so suddint but it ketched him an' broke his laig. Them 'at has seen it say it broke off an' splintered up 'bout ten feet. He's gittin' 'long first rate but the tree aint a mite o' good fer rails.

MRS. TRUE,

Now aint that too bad? Some folks do hev the worst luck in this world. I hope it'll all be made up to 'em in the next an' I rather guess it will.

MRS. SIMP,

Well, he didn't strike no great streak o' luck when he married Miriar Cobb. She's ben makin' a new rag carpet this spring though, jist got it home from Aunt Leeta's last Friday. I seen it go by. Its fer the settin' room and she's goin' to put the old one down in her bedroom an' two breaths in the kitchen. She didn't tell me so, she's tarnal close mouthed, Miriar is, but I seen that the tacks was out o' the settin' room an' bedroom carpets an' she'd jist finished cleanin' her kitchen floor Saturday an' about what two breaths would cover was jist wiped up an' the rest was scoured as white as soap an' sand could make it, shiftless.

MRS. TRUE,

Miriar's kind o' weakly an' you must make some allowance.

MRS. SIMP.

O yes. I allus do. That's mighty purty calico you got there

MRS. TRUE.

Yes, aint it pritty. Mrs. Smart took enough for Kitty an' apron an' it washed so well she come back an' got enough for him two shirts an' her a dress. Charlotte got a dress, an' Jim a waist, an' Reuben got some shirts, and the school-ma'am was lookin' at it last night. We've hed two pieces on it.

MRS. SIMP.

Let me hev nine yards. I don't keer if the skirt is a little mite scant. Give me ten. I see the school-ma'ams got ruffles on hern. Ruffles must be comin' in agin. Say I seen Mis Peters go by an——

(*Enter Samuel True with mail bag followed by Wash.*)

WASH.

Rat's old horse balked comin' up that last little pitch an' I thought we'd never git her started agin.

MRS. SIMP.

Feed her 'nough an' I guess she'd go. I seen him go by last week an——

(*Enter Kitty.*) C. D.

MRS. TRUE.

Now what Kitty?

KITTY.

Ma wants to borrow a cake of ivy soap.

MRS. TRUE.

(*Gives her soap and goes to help Mr. True sort the mail both stopping occasionally to glance over a postal card.*)

(*Mrs. Simp to Kitty.*)

Whats yer ma doin' these days, cleanin' house? (*Kitty nods*) Did she take up the settin' room carpet. Guess I'll step in to her house a minute while they are sortin' the mail.

(*Exit Mrs. Simp and Kitty.*)

MRS. TRUE.

The minister's sister is a comin' to visit him next week a Tuesday (*consults postal card.*) no a Thursday 'tis. Some folks writing looks like hen tracks.

*(Emma sticks head in door with face daubed with flour and a rolling pin in her hand.)*

*(Enter tramp.)* C. D.

Madam will you please give a poor invalid soldier a bite to eat?

MR. TRUE.

*(As Mrs. True starts toward kitchen door.)*

Now Charity, don't be in a hurry. *(to tramp.)* Whats your business an' why aint ye at it sted o' trampin' over the country makin' honest folks feed ye.

MRS. TRUE.

Now Samel, don't be too hard on him. I'd rather feed a hundred that don't deserve a bite than miss one that did. *(goes to left and speaks low to Emma who disappears.)*

TRAMP.

I am not the one to take exceptions to what you say about gentlemen of my profession. I know we're a bad lot and could well be spared, but after all theres usually some good excuse for us. I know them better than you do and tramps are not altogether bad. They are men with kindly impulses and generous hearts, and every one of them has his own particular history, which, while it don't excuse him, does in a measure explain his pitiable condition. Goodness knows it nor from choice that I'm reduced to this plight, *(brushes away a tear.)* there I've said more than I ought to, but you ma'am seem so good that—but of course you are not interested in my history. *(Picks a cigar stump out of the box of sawdust and puts it in an old sardine box which he takes from his pocket.)*

MR. & MRS. TRUE.

Yes, we be, tell us all about it.

TRAMP.

O, there isn't much to tell. My case is like thousands of others. When the call to arms came in '61 I wasn't the last to respond to that call. I left my happy home and for three years no man could say that Bill Smith ever quailed in the face of the enemy or flinched under fire. The thoughts of those dreadful years will always be uppermost in my mind and *(putting hand to shoulder and then to hip.)* it would be miraculous if I didn't bear on my person painful reminders of those awful days. When the

war closed and I came back I found no cheerful hearth stone and happy family. I found no beautiful wife and prattling infant. No one could tell me where they were. There was no clue. I have wandered on and on, through sunshine and through rain. Whether the blue skies be smiling over head, or snow and rain beat pitilessly down upon this tattered coat. It is all one to a man without a home. I shall wander on and on until I find them or until I grow too feeble to pursue the quest.

MRS. TRUE,

*(wipes eyes.)*

Poor man, poor man.

MR. TRUE,

Well mebby I've misjudged ye. If I'd been through all that I might be tramping myself. Give him suthin to eat mother.

*(blows his nose.)* Dern that red pepper.

*(Enter Emma.)*

EMMA,

The bite's on the kitchen table Mis True.

MRS. TRUE,

*(to tramp.)*

Go right out into the kitchen an' git a cup o' tea. It aint never goin' to be said of Charity True that she sent a hungry man from her door.

*(exit tramp.)* L. D.

*(enter Uncle Doo, shirt on wrong side before and coat on his arm)*

UNCLE DOO.

Afternoon Charity and Samel.

MRS. TRUE,

Why Uncle Doolittle what's the matter of your shirt?

UNCLE DOO.

It's made tother side to the front *fer style*. That's whats the matter. The old woman got a new fangled pattern some'rs buttoning up behind. Nice way fer a man to button his shirt aint it, but the old woman's great on style. Purty aint it?

MRS. TRUE,

Now Uncle Doo, if you'd put thet on right it'd look nice an' be a good fittin' shirt.



## UNCLE DOO.

Now see here Charity all the women in Slabtown can't move me a mite, not a mite. (*pounds on floor with cane.*) I've buttoned my shirt down the middle of the front fer over eighty years an' I'm goin' to button it there as long as I wear a shirt. If its any satisfaction fer the old woman to put the buzzom tother side from the buttons she can, she can,. I'm willin' to sacrifice some comfort fer style, but I shall button 'em where I dern please. (*Enter Mrs. Simp.*) C. D. (*sees Mrs. Simp.*) Is thet you Hitty Simpkins? I'd ask you the news but ye never know any, an' wouldn't tell if ye did. Now would ye? (*helps himself to crackers.*) Crackers aint very fresh be they? (*goes over to cheese and cuts off large slice.*)

MRS. SIMP,

I seen Jabe go by——

MR. TRUE,

Thet cheese is fourteen cents a pound Uncle Doo.

UNCLE DOO.

Well, taint wuth it. Its frowy, taint fit to eat, but I got used to eatin' most anythin' in the war an' ye can't turn my stomach.

WASH.

W-want you afraid you-you'd git hurt in the war, Uncle Doo?

UNCLE DOO.

Fraid! Me Fraid! Young man do I look like a man afraid of anything? Didn't I tell you about my swimmin' the Rappahannock.

(*Wash. shakes head, the rest nod their heads.*)

MRS. TRUE,

O, yes Uncle Doo., we've all heerd of your brave fight and—

UNCLE DOO.

I want a talkin' to you Charity. I'm goin' to tell Wash. here, an' it ton't hurt none on ye to hear it a second time.

MRS. TRUE,

(*Aside.*)

Ninety-second would come nearer the truth.

(*Mrs. Simp. and Mrs. True go over to dry goods side and Mrs. Simp. buys some handkerchiefs and stockings.*)

## UNCLE DOO.

As I was goin' to say, me and six other men started out to see if we could find out what the dern Rebs was doin' on tother side o' the river. Jest afore the boat teched the other side, I grabbed my gun an' jumped out, an' 'bout a dozen of the dern varmints opened fire on me. The other fellars lost their heads an' turned the boat an' sent her scootin' fer the other shore. Think I was skeered? Not a mite. Not a mite. I jest started out to swim thet half mile back with the bullets jest rainin' round me. The pesky Rebs had to come down close to the shore an' were firin' fast as they could load. I hed to dive out o' the way o' them bullets till I got bout half way across, then I jest turned over on my back an' floated an' picked them Rebs off as fast as I could load and fire thet old musket o' mine.

## WASH.

W-want yer powder wet?

## UNCLE DOO.

I do know whether 'twas or not, ner I don't ker, but I do know thet we rowed back and found eleven of them fellars piled up there. Everyone on 'em weerin' a bullet in his heart fer a buzzom pin.

## MRS. SIMP.

You allus was a brave man Uncle Doolittle, 'an a generous one. Hev ye heerd what the women think o' doin' now?

## UNCLE DOO.

No I aint heerd. Somethin' foolish o' course. (*Eats crackers and cheese and herring.*)

## MRS. SIMP.

No, but we decided to the last society to see if somethin' couldn't be done to fix up the buryin' ground fence. It needs it pow'rful bad. Cows a trampin' round in there, knockin' down the gravestuns. Ye can hev ever so satisfyin' a funeral fer yer friends, but it spiles the whole thing when ye get 'em to the seminary an' see cows a pokin' round, an' Deacon Sprigginses tumstun a layin' flat, an' him allus sich a straight up an' down man hisself. Takes the pleasure all out of it. We want to see it fixed up. How much will you give?

## UNCLE DOO.

Now much will I give? Not a cent. Not a cent. (*pounds*

*on floor with cane.*) I paid ten dollars fer a lot in thet buryin' ground mor'n twenty-five year ago an' I aint got a cents wuth o' use out of it yet. I aint never hed a livin' soul buried there yet, an' ye don't ketch me sendin' any good money arter bad. Next thing you'll be wantin' to hev the grass out. Humph.

MRS. SIMP,

Ye might give somethin'. Every little helps.

UNCLE DOO.

Not a cent. I aint a goin' to encourage a passel o' fool women's stuck up notions. *(crackers.)*

*(Enter tramp wiping mouth.)*

TRAMP,

That's the squarest meal I've had in a long time.

MRS. TRUE,

I wonder if you knew our Jim in the army. He was with Sherman on the march to the Sea. Was you with Sherman.

TRAMP,

*(Just as he steps outside door.)*

No, I was in Canada, and don't worry about my family. I guess I'll find them as soon as they want me. Good-day.

MR. TRUE.

The rascal. What did I tell ye mother? Ye feel sorry for him don't ye?

MRS. TRUE,

*(slowly.)*

Yes, a good deal sorrier than I did before. A man that can tell such a lie, so unblushin'ly has lost all sense of decency an' honor, an' a man that has lost, that has lost more than wife an' children an' home, an' is more to be pitied.

UNCLE DOO.

Got took in agin, hev ye Charity.

*(Enter Kitty.)*

KITTY,

Mis True, ma wants to borrow a comb for the company. The teeth's most all gone out o' ourn.

MRS. TRUE,

*(goes to show case and gets comb.)*

Here take this one, an' ye needn't bring it back.

*(Exit Kitty.)* I declare for it. She'll be wantin' to borrow Samel next.

*(Enter Eva.)*

EVA,

Any mail for our folks?

MR. TRUE,

Yes, here it is.

EVA,

Is that all?

MR. TRUE,

Yes, that's all.

EVA,

Anything fer pa?

MR. TRUE,

Yes, an' its in there.

EVA,

Anything fer ma?

MR. TRUE,

If there is, its there?

EVA,

*(starting away, coming back.)*

Aint there something fer grandpa?

MR. TRUE,

Now, see here little girl, its all there fer pa, ma, grandpa, grandma, uncles, aunts, cousins. Everything that goes up to your house. Now run along.

EVA,

*(goes as far as door and comes back.)*

Are you sure there aint anything fer Aunt Hattie?

MRS. TRUE,

See here, Eva, here's a stick o' candy. Now run along home, your pa'll be anxious to get thet circular ye got there.

*(Exit Eva.)*

MR. TRUE,

Now, mother ye mustn't give away so much candy an' gum. We can't make nuthin' keepin' store if you keep givin' away the profits.

MRS. TRUE,

Now, don't you worry Samel, a stick o' candy aint much, an' I'd rather make a youngun happy anytime than make a dollar.

MR. SIMP.

Any mail fer me Samel.

MR. TRUE,

Yes here's a letter.

MRS. SIMP.

Now, I want to know (*turning it over and over.*) Well now who do you spose thet can be from? Chicago-I never knew anybody in Chicago. Sarah Ann Higgins had a niece thet married an' went to Chicago to live. Married pretty well too I guess, keeps a hired girl they say. I never seen her but once, then I seen her go by. I don't believe its from her. It looks like a man's writ-in' too. There was thet man thet was a summer boardin' up to Hawkins's. He went to Chicago but I never seen him. Our mowin' machine was made in Chicago——

UNCLE DOO.

Hitty, I'll tell ye how ye can find out who its from.

MRS. SIMP,

Well, I'd jest like to know.

UNCLE DOO.

Why open it, open it. There aint no law agin it. (*she opens it.*)

MRS. SIMP.

Its from a Miss Yale an' she's sent her picture an' she says every woman kin be beautiful. If nature aint made 'em so she kin. Wal I dummo as I need any of her dope, I never was much on looks one way or tother, but if anything on earth kin be done fer thet nose o' Mariar Cobb's she ought to know it. Its quite a long letter an' I'll take it over to Mirandy Jane's and pursue it at my pleasure. Cy's comin' up after milkin' an' I'm goin' to wait fer him.

(*Exit Mrs. Simpkins.*) C. D.

WASH.

An-any post office fer me today?

MR. TRUE.

No Wash, she's forgot to write.

WASH.

How much is postage stamps by the dozen?

MR. TRUE,

Jest the same as by the piece. We don't sell 'em any cheaper by wholesale.

WASH.

I kin git 'em two fer five to the Falls.

(*Enter Reuben.*)

REUBEN,

Howdedo Uncle Doo. Hullo Wash. Afternoon Mis True.  
Any mail Sam.

(*Mr. True gives him "Weekly Leader."*)

REUBEN,

Is this all?

(*opens and reads.*)

MRS. TRUE,

(*reading paper.*)

Why Samel, Adam Skinner's wife is dead.

MR. TRUE,

No, is thet so? Wal I guess she's glad she's dead. What does it say?

MRS. TRUE,

Its a card o' thanks with some more 'tachek on. "I wish to thank my many friends and neighbors, also the choir, who done so much for my comfort durin' the sickness an' death of my diseased wife, Hanner, and who made the funeral so satisfactory, and one long to be remembered by one "who is left down here to mourn, an' who is now treadin' his lonely path alone." I also wish to announce that there will be a public sale at my place, one and one-half mile east of Dockville Center, Saturday May 15th. At which time I will offer for sale, two good cows, ten sheep, six shoats, ducks, turkeys, hens, one good family horse, can be drove by a woman sound in every particular. Also one good two seated spring wagon and several farming utensils. Also some furniture and several articles of female wearing apparel, belonging to my late wife who was keerful and equinomical, includin' one bunnit good for summer or winter, and a dolman good as new. Doughnuts and cider served to all at noon.

I mourn my melancholy lot,

She was to me so dear,

The terms is cash upon the spot,

Tim Bean is auctineer.

I also take this opportunity to say that I wish to buy a stylish lookin' single top buggy, cheap for cash."

ADAM SKINNER.

MR. TRUE,

Well, he feels pretty bad, don't he?

*(Enter four or five small boys and girls asking for mail. All ask as they receive it "Is this all?" )*

*(Reuben folds paper and puts it in pocket.)*

REUBEN,

Jocks, I'm goin' up to Cleveland some day. Kier Hill says its so that they hev buildings up there ten an' fifteen stories high an' all the way up inside they have gravestun steps. Gee, I'd like to see 'em.

UNCLE DOO.

Yes, an' on top o' one o' them sky skaters, they hev got the machine thet runs the weather. I read 'bout it.

REUBEN.

Jocks, I'd like to git hold o' that machine till after I got my corn in.

*(Enter Emma.)* L. D.

EMMA,

Be youse a comin' to supper 'cause its ready.

MRS. TRUE,

*(takes up pair of large shoes.)*

Here Emmy, your shoes hev come.

EMMA, *(taking shoes.)*

My, they look kind o' big, don't they? But I hev to wear big shoes on account o' my feet.

*(Exit Mrs. True and Emma.)*

MR. TRUE,

Uncle Doolittle, aint ye goin' home to supper?

UNCLE DOO.

No, I aint hungry these days. Guess my stummick's off. Taint never ben strong sense the war. I aint got no appetite, an' I aint a mite hungry, not a mite.

MR. TRUE,

Well, I guess you can keep store while I eat my supper.

*(attaches cord to door, which rings bell in house when door opens)*

*(Exit Mr. True.)*

REUBEN,

Uncle Doo, speakin' o' that weather machine up to Cleveland I wonder if thet aint the mayor's political machine. He's got one. I read 'bout it an' its a good stout one.

UNCLE DOO.

Now, see here young man if yer dont want to spile yer reputation fore yer fairly growed, you keep out o' pollyticks. You read the "Leader" and vote the straight Republican ticket jest as yer father an' granfather did afore ye an——

*(Loud whoa is heard outside.)*

UNCLE DOO.

*(going to door looking out.)*

Here's one o' them drummers. They are great fer ketchin a body up, but I'm enough fer 'em. Watch me get the best o' him,

*(Enter drummer carrying sample case.) bell rings in house.*

*(Enter from kitchen Mr. True chewing and wiping mouth on back of hand.)*

WASH.

Where's your drum Mister, where's your drum?

DRUMMER,

Good evening Mr. True, I'm a little late, but——

MR. TRUE,

Hello, Hello, I guess I'm all stocked up so you needn't unpack.

DRUMMER,

*(opening case.)*

How about sugar. Sugar is going to advance.

MR. TRUE,

I got plenty, got most a hull barrel.

DRUMMER,

Coffee, Arbuckles or Lion? Tea, spices, beans, canned goods soap, starch, clothes lines, clothes pins, clothes pins are going up. A trust is after 'em. Brooms, pipes, tobacco, cigars. Good thing here in cigars. You take a thousand for thirty-five dollars and we throw in an encyclopedia.

MR. TRUE,

*(going toward kitchen.)*

Now, I couldn't ride one of the blame things if I hed it.



I don't need a thing, an I've got to finish my supper. The boys'll be comin' in fust I know.

DRUMMER.

*(following him up.)*

Soda, baking powder. Got a fine new prize scheme here in baking powder. Here's something new in soap that I know you want. Wool soap prevents flannels from shrinking.

MR. TRUE,

Our women folks all use soft soap fer their washin'.

DRUMMER,

Yes, an' shrink your woolen clothes all up so that you can't get them on after the first washing. I got some new underwear last winter. It was washed with ordinary soap. After the second washing I gave it to my twelve year old brother from him it passed to my six year old nephew, and now——

UNCLE DOO.

Yes, now the baby's a wearin' of it. He, he, he, I've heerd that same old story before.

DRUMMER,

Let me put you down for a few cakes, Mr. True.

MR. TRUE,

No, soft soap is good enough fer me, an' I'm goin' to finish my supper.

*(Exit.)*

*(Drummer repacks sample case. Wash gets behind Uncle Doo-little and draws a picture on his shirt bosom while he tells story.)*

UNCLE DOO

*(winks at Reuben.)*

Say, young man ye never saw a hogskin harness, did yer? Speakin' of shrinkin' they are the things thet can shrink. I hed one when I first come to this country, made it myself an' 'twas a good one. I hed a team o' hosses then thet was a team. They could o' pulled old Bunker Hill monument right out by the roots if nothin' 'bout the harness didn't give way. I was haulin' logs up to the house one day on a mud sled an' it come on a drizzly kind o' rain. I hed on a purty good load of logs so I thought I'd jist keep on if it did rain, seein' twas my last load. I got 'em 'bout four rods from the back door an' jist started up a little

pitch when the sled stuck. How them hosses did pull. By thet time the harnesses was purty wet, an' the blame tugs begun to stretch, an' every yank they give them tugs would stretch 'bout a foot. Afore I knowed, the hosses were up to the door but the sled hadn't moved a peg. 'Twas gittin' dark so I jist took the harnesses off an' threw 'em over an old hickory stump. Say in the mornin' the sun come out hot, an' the harness began to dry out an' shrink. 'Fore noon they hed shrunk back to their right size and hauled thet load of logs right up to the kitchen door.

DRUMMER,

Thats a pretty stretchy story, Uncle.

REUBEN,

Thets all so, I know, fer I've heerd Uncle Doo. tell it morn forty times.

UNCLE DOO,

No sir, there aint nothin' like hogskin fer stretchin' when its wet. Its like injy rubber.

DRUMMER,

Speaking of rubber. Did you folks hear about the big fire in the rubber factory down to New York.

UNCLE DOO.

No, what about it?

DRUMMER.

Well, the fire was just an ordinary fire, but the night watchman was asleep in the tenth story and didn't wake up until the elevator-shaft and stairway were all afire. The firemen could'nt get to him and it was looking pretty bad for him when an idea struck him. He broke open some of the packing cases and took out some mackintoshes and hot water bottles and the like. He plastered himself over with the hot water bottles, and wrapped around the mackintoshes until he looked like a big rubber ball. Had an idea you know, that the rubber would sort of break his fall on the pavement.

UNCLE DOO.

Yes, an' he jumped out an' lit jist as soft as if he'd fell off the bottom rung of a ladder.

DRUMMER,

No, he hit so hard that he bounced up an' down for two days and a half and they finally had to shoot him.

UNCLE DOO., REUBEN &amp; WASH.

Shoot him——

UNCLE DOO.

What did they shoot him fer?

DRUMMER,

*(grip in hand at door.)*

Why they had to, the poor man was starving to death. Good night.

*(Exit.)*

UNCLE DOO.

*(stares after him with mouth open for several seconds.)*

Wal, I swan, Jocks.

REUBEN,

*(helping himself to crackers.)*

Now, Uncle Doo, going back to pollyticks.

I wish we hed free trade anyhow. It would be a big thing fer us farmers.

UNCLE DOO.

Wal, we haint got, so you kin jest keep out o' thet cracker barrel.

*(Covers it with a slam.)*

REUBEN,

*(gets up and goes over and sits on counter on fly paper.)*

As I was a sayin' free trade would be a mighty good thing fer us farmers. Somethin's the matter with us an' I believe its the tariff thet's ailin' of us. Thet fellar thet made thet speech up to the Corners 'fore election said we was slaves an' hev got to be amaciated like the black slave was, an' jocks, I believe it.

UNCLE DOO.

Stuff an' nonsense.

WASH.

When I git big enough I'm goin' to vote, an-an I'll fix 'em.  
*(Shakes fists.)*

REUBEN,

Is the Republican party goin' to do anythin' to amaciate us? Not much. Its a caterin' to the big corpulations an' us farmers kin look out fer ourselves. You haint got no free trade plank in yer platform, an' till you put one there I shall stick to the Democrats.

UNCLE DOO.

What's the good of a free trade plank. They might all be free trade planks, but they haint no good s'long's the Democrats

can't git in power, an' they can't, they can't. Keep on the big side, 'long with the folks with the money. Them's my sentiments.

REUBEN. (*excitedly.*)

No sir, it's the tariff thet's keepin' us down I believe, an' I'm goin' to vote with the party thet'll knock thet out. When I settle on a thing I stick to it.

(*gets up and walks around excitedly with the fly paper sticking to him.*)

An jocks, I'm goin' to stick to this.

UNCLE DOO.

Wal, I rather guess ye be, cause ye can't git it off, but it don't make you look any prettier.

REUBEN,

(*Peeling it off.*) I, jocks, aint thet enough to rile a fellar? What fer do they want to go a stickin' this pesky stuff round where folks is goin' to set fer?

UNCLE DOO.

There its off now ye better be kind o' keerful where ye set fer a few days. Say, Reub, did ye hear anything more 'bout that man thet got shot down to the Falls last week?

REUBEN,

Got shot? Where? How did it happen?

UNCLE DOO,

Why he bought a pound and an' paid fer it in Smith's store. He, he, he. Thet's one on you. (*Laughs.*)

REUBEN,

That's a pretty good one. I'll work that on Sam when he comes in.

(*Enter Mr. True.*) REUBEN, (*Winking at Uncle Doo.*)

Say, Sam, did ye hear 'bout thet man gettin' some shot down to the Falls last week?

MR. TRUE.

No, why? Did he get so much?

REUBEN,

No, he bought a pound an' paid fer it, but thunderation I don't see any fun in it now, Uncle Doo.

UNCLE DOO.

*(chuckling.)*

No, nor don't nobody else.

*(Enter Mrs. True, LEFT. and Henry Jenks, CENTER with an egg in each hand, falls and breaks one. Mrs. True picks him up.)*

MRS. TRUE,

What did you want Henry?

HENRY,

Mama give me an egg to get a nutmeg, an' one to get a stick of gum. I guess 'twas the nutmeg egg that broke, so I'll take the stick of gum.

*(Mrs. True gives him both.)*

MR. TRUE,

Now mother, mother eggs is only ten cents a dozen.

MRS. TRUE,

Yes, I know Samel, but there's quite a profit on nutmegs.

MR. TRUE,

Here Henry here's yer mail.

HENRY,

Thank you, sir.

*(Exit Henry.)*

MR. TRUE,

Thet's a fine little boy o' Jenkses an' he'll mount to somethin' some day.

UNCLE DOO.

Can't tell, can't tell the smartest ones usually turns out the worst. There's thet youngest Hendrick's boy, smart as a whip, didn't take nobody's sass. Could lick any boy in school, was the best fighter they hed. What's he doin' now? Preachin' up in Cleveland.

MR. TRUE.

Wal, he might o' done worse, an' I presume to say he's a good one.

UNCLE DOO.

Good enough as preachers go, but think of wastin' a boy like that fer a preacher. Why, he might a made anything of himself a lawyer or a pollytician, an' ben looked up to an' respected but he jist fizzled down into a preacher.

MRS. TRUE,

Now, see here Uncle Doo, you are all wrong. It takes a mighty smart boy to make a good preacher, an' themus the kind we want, an' its a good sight more respectable than the lawyer business. Its the preacher thet smooths out the rough places in this world an' encourages us to live lovin', peacable lives with our neighbors, and the lawyer fellows is allus a stirrin' up trouble to make work fer themselves. Give us good, clean, straight timber fer our preachers, I say, an' put yer knotty, snappy, green stuff into lawyers, if we must have 'em.

MR. TRUE,

That's right mother give it to him. Your pintin' right as usual. If we had the right kind of preachers everywhere, I suspicion there wouldn't be so much work fer the lawyers.

WASH. (*Jumping up excitedly.*)

I-I forgot. M-ma wants a bottle o' lemon extry.

MR. TRUE,

(*giving extract.*)

Here, Wash, you stop at Peabody's an' leave this pound o' soda. I promised to send it up if I hed a chance.

WASH.

W-well I-I do know 'bout stoppin' there. The doctor says he's got information on the brain.

MRS. TRUE,

Well, that won't hurt you, will it?

WASH.

It-it may be ketchin' an-an I don't want to get nothin' on my brain.

UNCLE DOO.

There haint no danger, no danger 'tall of anythin' ever effectin' your brain.

MRS. TRUE,

Taint brain trouble anyhow. He took cold gatherin' sap buckets an' the doctor's afraid of ammonia.

WASH,

W-well I'll take it an' fire it over the fence an' yell an' run.

(*Exit.*)

(*Enter Cy Simp. and Mrs. Hezekiah Hill from city.*)

CYRUS,

Evenin' people. Got any new spring hats, Sam?

(*Mr. True and Mr. Simp. try on hats, Reuben and Uncle Doo. talk and whistle.*)

MRS. HILL,

Good evening, Mrs. True. Have you any blue taffeta ribbon.

MRS. TRUE,

No, we've just got the plain taffy in a chunk. We aint never kept that kind strung out into ribbon. I've seen it though, but I aint never seen any blue.

(*Enter Kitty.*)

KITTY,

Mis True, ma wants to know if you wont let Mr. True come over a little while an' help her stretch down the spare room carpet.

MRS. TRUE,

Will I let him? See here you go home an' tell yer ma thet I aint never refused to lend her anythin' from a fine tooth comb to a settin' hen, but I draw the line at Samel. He aint to lend. Where's your pa?

KITTY,

He's over to the blacksmith shop talkin' pollyticks to Jimmie's pa. He told ma that Mr. Mills was on the fence an' he'd have to see him, but he wasn't. I went an' looked an' he was settin' on the horse block, an' pa went, and went to talkin' pollyticks with him.

MRS. TRUE,

Well, go tell him yer ma wants him to help her.

KITTY,

Well, he can't stretch carpet. It'll hurt his rhumatiz.

MRS. TRUE,

No, it won't. Not his kind. You go tell him.

KITTY,

He'll say he's too busy to come.

(*Exit Kitty.*)

MRS. TRUE,

He's afeerd the country will go to rack an' ruin if he lets up on his pollyticks fer a minute. If sich men as him would take as much interest in their famblys as they do in their pollyticks the country wouldn't need so much lookin' after.

CYRUS,

I guess I'll take this one Sam. Its more becomin' an' seems to fit me, an' I want five pounds o' ten penny nails an' a plug o' tobacey.

MRS. HILL,

Mrs. True, have you any filo floss?

MRS. TRUE,

(*setting out box of files.*)

We hev the files; allus keep 'em, but we aint never hed any call fer the other stuff.

MRS. HILL,

Well, let me have a spool of white silk. Perhaps that will do.

(*Enter school-ma'am, Nellie Jones.*)

NELLIE,

Good evening everybody. What a perfect day we have had.

UNCLE DOO,

See here, young woman. Be you the school-ma'am.

NELLIE,

Yes, Mr. Doolittle. I am the school-ma'am.

UNCLE DOO,

Well, you look as though ye ought to know somethin'.

NELLIE,

Thank you, sir.

UNCLE DOO,

But yer wrong on some pints, your wrong on some pints. I hear thet yer learnin' them younguns that the world air round. Air thet so?

NELLIE,

I have been teaching that. You don't think I'm wroeng on that point, do you, Mr. Doolittle?

UNCLE DOO,

I don't think nothin' 'bout it. I *know*. You've ben learnin' of 'em wrong an' I want it *stopped*. The Bible tells us of the four corners of the earth. If its got corners it can't be round. You can't go agin the Bible (*pounds floor with cane.*) You can't go agin the Bible.

NELLIE,

Well, Mr. Doolittle I will investigate further. (*goes over talks to Mrs. Hill.*)



UNCLE DOO.

Dew so, dew so. You'll find yer wrong  
(*Enter Bride.*)

BRIDE,

Mrs. True, I want some mustard.

MRS. TRUE,

How much do you want Jennie?

BRIDE,

Why, let me see. I guess two or three pounds will be enough.

MRS. TRUE,

We have it in half pound and quarter pound packages. I guess quarter of a pound 'll be enough fer you an' John.

BRIDE,

O Yes, plenty thank you Aunt Charity, and I want some sugar.

MRS. TRUE,

How much, Jennie,

JENNIE,

Why quarter of a pound.

MRS. TRUE,

I guess a pound o' sugar won't be too much

JENNIE,

Thank you, Aunt Charity, I wish you'd tell me how to make those buckwheat cakes again. I made some but they were not right. John laughed at them an' called them biscuits (*wipes eyes.*)

MRS. TRUE,

Why you poor child you put too much flour in. Never mind. I'll drop in tonight an' stir 'em up for ye, an' show ye jest how. John won't find no fault with 'em. I'll warrant.

(*Exit Bride.*)

(*Enter Wash., running, falls full length.*)

WASH.

There's a Eyetalian comin' with a whoppin' great bear  
(*gets behind counter and gets cheese knife.*)

UNCLE DOO.

A bear? Bears aint nothin'. If you'd seen as many bears as I hev ye wouldn't be so skeerd on 'em. Why, in the spring

o' 1830 they was so thick they tromped our corn all down into the mud and killed it an' one of the pesky varmints come right into the house an' carried off a hen that was a settin' in the corner of the kitchen. I've killed as high as twenty in one day.

REUBEN,

That's so. I've heard Uncle Doo. tell it morn than forty time.

UNCLE DOO.

'Member one day I was fishin'. Settin' down on thet pint o' rock thet sticks out over the river doawn in Simpkinses' back parster, when I heerd a kind o' grunt an' looked round to find a almighty great bear stamin' right behind me a lickin' his chops, an' a grimm'n' to think how he'd ketched me.

(*Exclamations of Wash. horror from Mrs. Hill and School-ma'am, the rest look bored.*) Addressing himself to Mrs. Hill and Nellie.) Now, what you spose I done? I didn't want to git wet by jumpin' in the river so I jist set about charmin' thet bear with my eye. He begun to back away an' me a follerin' an' I snum, you might not believe it, but I backed the critter over them two miles home an' into the smoke house jest with my eye, an him a growlin' every step. I shut him in and went to the house an' got my gun an' finished him.

MRS. HILL,

That's a pretty big bear story, Uncle.

UNCLE DOO.

'Twas a big bear. He was the biggest one ever seen in these parts. The whole neighborhood lived on bar meat fer weeks. I aint afeerd o' any bar thet——

(*Enter Italian with bear, followed by Jimmie, Kitty, Eva, Henry, Mrs. Simp, Mirandy, Jane, Mr. Hill.*)

(*Uncle Doo, in his haste to get behind the counter, tips over the cracker barrel. Mr. True scoops up crackers and puts them back in barrel.*)

ITALIAN,

Twentyfivi centi make de bear dance.

MR. TRUE,

Too much Mr. Italy. Ten cents.

ITALIAN,

No teni centi, twenty centi.

MR. TRUE,

All right, stir him up an' we'll take up a collection.

(*bear dances.*) Applause.

ITALIAN,

Bear much tired, no more dance.

(*exit Italian and bear.*)

MRS. TRUE,

What are you younguns slicked up so fer?

KITTY,

Why, Mis True its the last day o' school, an' we spoke pieces an' spelled down an' Mr. Hill an' Mis Hill sung fer us an'——

MRS. TRUE,

Fer the lan's sake, I clear fergot the last day of school, an' I allus try to go, even if my own younguns is all growd up an' gone. I'm disapinted. I would'nt missed it fer anythin'. Kitty won't you speak yer piece fer me? I hate to miss it altogether.

(*voice from outside.*) Jimmie, Jimmie.

MRS. TRUE,

Jimmie, your mothers callin' ye?

JIMMIE,

(*sitting on counter.*)

I know it. (*spits.*)

NELLIE,

Come Kitty you speak your piece.

(*Kitty speaks.*)

UNCLE DOO.

Mirandy Jane you sing something. Your singin' allus makes me think of the birds a singin' in the airly mornin' when we're a leetle mite nearer Heaven than we be any other time.

MIRANDY,

Thank you, Uncle Doolittle. I'll sing fer you but——(*to Mr. and Mrs. Hill.*) I never went to singin' school but one term.

(*sings "Do they Miss me at Home."*)

While Miranda sings, Reuben appears to buy a hoe or some other farming utensil.

UNCLE DOO.

(*speaks Riley's "An' old played out song" and all sing the first verse of "Do They Miss Me" very softly after he has finished.*)

MRS. SIMP,

I'd like to hear Mr. Hill sing something. You used to hev quite a knack fer singin' when ye was a boy.

MR. HILL,

Well, I'll do the best I can, though I'm not used to singing without my music. (*sings Annie Laurie.*)

(*voice from outside.*) Jimmie, Jimmie.

MRS. TRUE,

You better go an' see what yer ma wants, Jimmie.

JIMMIE,

I know what she wants. She wants me to come home, but I aint goin' till I git good an' ready.

MRS. TRUE,

Wal, if ye don't go till ye git good I'm afeerd she's got a long wait before her.

(*Man's voice from outside.*) James. (*Jimmie makes one bound for the door and disappears.*)

MRS. TRUE,

It didn't take him long to git ready after his pa called.

REUBEN,

How much did ye git fer the molasses ye sent up to Cleveland Cy?

CYRUS,

Wal, I didn't git so much as I was callatin' on but I didn't spect I should.

UNCLE DOO.

I spose Kier, you've got to be one of them bicycle dude fellows thet go skylootin' through the country skeerin' decent folks horses aint ye?

MR. HILL,

Yes, I do ride a wheel and its good excercise for one too. Better get yourself one Uncle.

UNCLE DOO.

No, I don't need one. I haint got so dumb lazy yet thet I hev to set down to walk.

WASH.

I-I-I use to spoke a piece. Wh-wh-when I went to the last day t-too.

MR. TRUE,

Well, lets hear your piece, Wash.

MRS. TRUE,

Now, Pa I don't believe he knows anythin'

WASH,

Y-y-yes I do Mis True. T-teacher learned me.

REUBEN,

Well, let'er go Wash.

(*Wash. speaks "When the Green Gits back in the Trees" - Riley*)  
(*Enter Italian buys crackers and herring and cats.*)

NELLIE,

I should like to hear Mrs. Hill sing again. Do you sing Sweet Afton?"

MRS. HILL,

I'll do the best I can but I'm not sure that I know it all.  
(*sings.*) (*Mrs. Simpkins buys a broom.*)

NELLIE,

Now Eva, you speak your piece for Mrs. True,  
(*Eva speaks.*)

CYRUS,

Wal, come on Hitty, I guess the old hoss'll be ready to go, standin' all the afternoon in the meetin' house shed.

MRS. SIMP,

I aint goin' a step till I hear Mirandy Jane sing again. Cant ye sing thet rocky bye baby song?  
(*Mirandy sings Lullaby.*)

MRS. HILL,

Is there not something that we can all sing?

UNCLE DOO.

We kin sing Old Folks to Hum, an' I wish ye would. These new fangled pieces aint got no music in 'em. Its most my bed time an' I must be peggin' towards home so jest sing that fer a good night one an' we'll all pull out an' let these folks shet up the store and go to bed. (*All sing and go out as they are singing last chorus. Leaving Uncle, True and wife and Emma alone.*)

MRS. TRUE,

Emmy, you better go to bed, you know you hate to git up an' I hev to call you two or three time.  
(*exit Emma yawning.*)

MRS. TRUE,

Now Samel, I guess I'll jest run up an' see how Mis Todd's baby is, an' take a plate of doughnuts up to Mis Warren. If she's hed toothache fer two or three days she must be 'bout out 'o bakin an' I promised I'd run in an' set some buchwheat cakes for Jennie. I won't be gone long an' its only half past seven.

MR. TRUE,

Seems to me, Charity, yer allus tuckerin' yerself out waitin' on other folks. Why don't yer let 'em wait on you a spell?

MRS. TRUE,

The Lord made me able to wait on myself, an' I thank Him for it. If some of the rest of His children are kind 'o helpless an' need a lift once in a while, I ca late He rather expects me to turn in an' help, an' He has a right to expect it, seein' as He has made me strong an' healthy.

MR. TRUE,

Mebby so, mebbly so, Charity, but you spend your whole life a doin' fer others.

MRS. TRUE,

Well, Samel, that's all life's for, jest helpin' others an' I never yet seen the man or woman that was so poor or so fur down that they couldn't find someone worse off an' give 'em a lift, if they was a mind to. (*Takes plate of doughnuts and goes out, calls back*) don't fergit to put the nail over thet window.

MR. TRUE,

(*Busy straightening store and locking up, takes cash from box and puts it in old blue sock.*) Well, she's allus a mind to. She's rightly named, Charity. Never a better woman lived. She's too good to be a rummin' a country store, but we do a heap o' other business. We seem to hev in connection a free dispensary an' free restaurant, a hospittle, a information bureau, readin' room, cookin' school, nursery, an' Heaven knows what else. Why, one of them settlement houses we read about up to the city can't compare with us for helpfulness in the community. I aint sure that the folks appreciate all this, but they ought to an' stand right up fer the Post Master's wife and fer Hunker's P. O.

(*Curtain goes down while Mr. True stands in the middle of the stage, slowly winding a big, old-fashioned silver watch.*)



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